

BIG BUDDHA FILMS PRESENTS:

# STILL LOVED

IS IT BETTER TO HAVE LOVED AND LOST?

A FEATURE DOCUMENTARY BY DEBBIE HOWARD



**"IF YOU SEE ONE DOCUMENTARY  
IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS MAKE IT THIS ONE  
AN INSIGHTFUL, VISCERAL ACCOUNT OF HOW PARENTS  
DEAL WITH STILLBIRTH - A MIGHTY ACHIEVEMENT."**  
RACHEL NEWMAN, GROW THEATRE

**"AMAZING, BEAUTIFULLY  
PACED AND VERY MOVING"**  
AMANDA GOODMAN, BBC NEWS

**"THE FILM IS NOT ABOUT DEATH, IT'S ABOUT LIFE  
AND THE DEPTH OF HUMAN STRENGTH TO CONTINUE"**  
REBECCA MARK LAWSON, TYKE FILMS

DIRECTED BY DEBBIE HOWARD EDITED BY JOBY GEE PRODUCED BY DEBBIE HOWARD | COLIN PONS | POLLY PERKINS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY EMMA DALESMAN  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LUCY PAUL | RUTH PITT POST PRODUCTION MOLINARE ORIGINAL MUSIC JACK KETCH SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR GEORGE FOULGHAM

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## SYNOPSIS

### 100 words

*Still Loved* is an uplifting story celebrating the resilience of the human spirit. This thought provoking film takes us beyond grief, showing how love, generosity and humour can prevail. Over three years we explore the complexity and reality for families surviving baby loss. Giving an unexpected voice to bereaved fathers, who speak candidly for the first time providing an additional perspective to that offered by mothers, grandparents and siblings. This is a brave, inclusive and ultimately life affirming film.

### 250 words

Over three years we follow seven families and explore the complexity and reality of surviving baby loss.

*Still Loved* is an uplifting and thought provoking film, which takes us beyond the grief, showing how love, generosity and humour can prevail.

Eve is a glamorous young woman who endured the loss of her baby alone, when her partner left during her pregnancy. Due to cultural beliefs, Eve was blamed by the father's family for baby Jordan's death. She has struggled to come to terms with what happened and the isolation she faces.

Beth and Steve lost twin girls. Trying to rebuild their lives by fundraising to help others suffering from loss, they discover it will be difficult for Beth to conceive again. Will they ever become parents to a living child?

After Lou's daughter is stillborn she channels her grief into a baby loss support group. Her husband feels alienated and is angry that she isn't focusing her energy on their first child Finn. They struggle to keep their family together.

Matthew and Juliette embark on their next pregnancy after losing their son Ben. The pregnancy is fraught with fear as they wonder daily if the growing baby will survive.

*Still Loved* gives an unexpected voice to bereaved fathers, who speak candidly for the first time offering an unheard perspective on this marginalized taboo of paternal loss, as well as mothers, grandparents and siblings. This is a brave, inclusive and ultimately life affirming film celebrating the resilience of the human spirit.

## Artistic Statement from the Director

During the making of my previous short film *Peekaboo*, I had already built up close relationships with many families that had lost babies, so I had their trust from the beginning of this documentary and was able to gain remarkable access to their personal lives. I had become passionate about telling these parents' stories over the past six years, as I had discovered how much of a taboo talking about stillbirth is and how this impedes the healing of the families involved. I had met courageous, humorous and generous people and desperately wanted to share their stories with others.

The challenge I faced was to engage audiences to watch a film about such a difficult subject matter and for this film to have further reach than those that have lost a baby themselves. In order to tackle this, I chose stories that offer hope, love, resilience and courage. Ultimately it's a human story uncovering the incredible ability to triumph over adversity. The participants are very candid about their feelings, and although heartbreaking in places, we use humor to offer relief and create light and shade throughout the film.

We focus mainly on three families' distinct and unique stories, supported by other families to punctuate and enhance the three main narratives. These are cleverly woven together into one story arc, telling a common story with different voices. This helps to illustrate the frequency of baby loss and how it affects so many more people than just the parents, including siblings, extended family and friends.

We look closely at the role of the fathers. Dads often feel marginalized when a baby dies, most of the focus being on the mother. In *Still Loved* the dads express their feelings about losing their baby and about the way our culture and society expects men to handle this, not really giving them a place or time to grieve. We are passionate about giving the fathers a voice in this film and they relish the opportunity to speak candidly about how they really feel adding an unexpected twist to the story.

Each of our storylines conclude with optimism and hope, finding resolutions to their grief in their own unique and varied ways, showing how although they will never forget their children, it is possible to move forward and find happiness again. This is not a film about death. It's about life and the strength of the human spirit to continue.

## **Still Loved Creative Team**

Our crew have been working with great passion and dedication for three years to bring Still Loved to the screen, some of them have a personal connection with the material having experienced the loss of a baby themselves. Working long hours, often for little financial reward, their commitment to this documentary is evident in their collaborative approach to completing the film.



**Writer/Director/Producer: Debbie Howard**

Debbie worked as a professional actor for twenty five years before moving into film making nine years ago. She has made a wide range of fiction and documentary films to date, winning several nominations and awards for her work. She set up Big Buddha Films and specialises in telling provocative and challenging stories, both fiction and documentary. Debbie's latest narrative short, *Peekaboo*, looks at stillbirth. During the making of this film she forged strong relationships with many parents who had lost their babies, gaining their trust and giving her remarkable access and support for this documentary. Debbie's strengths lie in telling a bold story and getting the best out of her contributors.

She is also an Associate Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, teaching Acting for Screen. She teaches workshops and seminars on acting technique and film making and mentors young filmmakers for the BFI Film Academy.



**Editor: Joby Gee**

BAFTA Craft and Royal Television Society Craft award winning editor Joby Gee has worked in television for over thirty years. Starting as a runner in 1984 and then moving up the ranks to assistant film editor and, a year later, to editor. His range of work has developed in diversity from political documentaries to landmark science series including *Horizon* and *Walking With Dinosaurs*, feature length drama documentaries like the EMMY nominated *The Flight That Fought Back* for Discovery US to helping fledgling directors with their first films. His work on BBC2's 'The Fallen' won him the BAFTA award for Best Editing (Factual) and the RTS Craft Award for editing along with a further two RTS and BAFTA nominations.



### **Supervising Re-Recording Mixer: George Foulham**

George Foulham is recognised as one of the most respected dubbing mixers in the industry, particularly for his Feature and TV Documentary work. Having begun his mixing career at Video London Sound Studios where he was a pioneer in the transition of sound mixing to video. Since moving to Molinare George's reputation for quality mixing has led to a large number of Industry award wins and nominations, including the 2010 BAFTA Sound Factual Craft Award win for BBC's 'Trawlermen,' preceded by multiple UK Screen Conch Awards for projects such as the Oscar-winning 'Man On Wire' and Grierson-winning 'Mugabe & the White African', and the 2003 RTS Award for Factual Sound on the BBC series 'Fighting The War.' George also worked on *Project Nim*, *Virunga* and *The End of the Line*.



### **Senior Colourist: Chris Rodgers**

Chris is an experienced colourist across all genres with an incredibly technical eye for detail and a sympathetic touch. He is always conscious of what material has been shot and the tone of a production, aiming to create images that don't feel too 'affected.' Having joined Molinare in the Autumn of 2014, Chris has recently added a number of high profile productions to his portfolio including Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites for Shine TV and Brian Hill's upcoming feature documentary *The Confessions Of Thomas Quick*. He is currently working on series two of Sky One's family comedy *Yonderland*. Prior to joining Molinare, Chris set up and managed the grading department at Splice TV. Having begun his grading career there in a DS suite, Chris implemented their new grading system and workflow, and by the end of his time there was overseeing two grading suites which covered both TV and theatrical work. While there, Chris graded Kim Longinotto's documentary *Dreamcatcher*, which recently won the Directing Award in the World Cinema Category at Sundance 2015.



**Producer: Colin Pons – Studio of the North**

Colin Pons has worked in a variety of roles in the UK film and TV industry over the last twenty five years, building up a range of skills that he regularly shares, often working with first time directors and producers. Key elements of these roles are the development, financing, production and mentoring of television and feature films. As a commissioner Colin has identified and funded many award winning films and individuals. Members of the SON mini studio through the years have included Caroline Cooper Charles, Peter Carlton, Daniela Zanzotto, Tinge Krishnan, Rebecca Mark-Lawson and Mark Herbert



**Creative Producer: Polly Perkins**

Having graduated in Film Theory and Production, she started out working for Channel 4's TFI Friday as a production assistant/celebrity wrangler until the show's finale. Polly developed further production and aesthetic understanding on independent short films as an art director, props master and as a production office manager. She continued to refine her project management and promotional skills with a variety of cultural projects, running a venue, producing festivals, carnivals, performances and shows, cultural journalism and parenting. In love with all things creative, she also writes satire, crafts craftily and bakes, too. By day she is our producer, by night the bare knuckled singer in a funky new wave band Man Bites Fridge.



**Executive Producer: Ruth Pitt**

Ruth Pitt is an executive producer, journalist and writer with a long track record in documentary making and creative leadership. Previous posts include head of factual and features at Tiger Aspect Productions, creative director of documentaries in BBC Religion and Ethics, head of documentaries at Granada Television and work with Century Films, Yorkshire Television, Real Life Productions and Screen England. Programmes of particular note include the acclaimed 7UP series . In addition Ruth was editor of the multiple award winning BBC documentary strand Everyman and she also executive produced a host of films and series including *Owning Auschwitz*, *The Great British Property Scandal*, *My Big Fair Trade Adventure* and many more. Ruth is a regular session chair, interviewer and broadcaster and has chaired the Guardian Edinburgh International Television Festival. She is BAFTA nominated and awards include Royal Television Society, Grierson, Broadcast Production, Sandford St Martin, New York Film Festival and International Emmy.



**Exec Producer: Lucy Paul**

Lucy Paul is founder and Managing Director of Itch Film, production company, which has a roster of international award-winning Directors for commercials and music promos that work with agencies across the world. Lucy recently produced and Exec Produced her first feature documentary about British artist and cartoonist Ralph Steadman titled 'For No Good Reason'. In 2014 Sony Pictures Classics released the film to much critical acclaim. She is currently in production on a further two portrait films about British artists and in development on a broadcast series. Lucy has built strong relationships and a loyal client base producing commercials for clients including: Universal, Warners, Atlantic, Unilever, P&G, Samsung. Itch Film run a motion control studio in Kings Cross for shooting commercials, film titles & sequences.

**Composer: Jack Ketch**

Jack Ketch is a versatile multi-instrumentalist composer with 14 years experience. Whether scoring to frame for orchestra, capturing simple acoustic instruments or providing advanced electronic programming, he prides himself on making very high quality music that connects emotionally, to any deadline. Jack has made all sorts of music for all sorts of people, including major theatre work including the RSC, films for the Tate Modern, various commercials,

music installations (ICA, Tate Britain, Barbican) and has been involved in many commercially available albums. He has scored many documentaries including Grierson winners *Gypsy Blood* and *Secret Iraq* and BAFTA winner *Our War*. He also scored *Dogging Tales*, *Fabulous Fashionistas*, *Targetting Bin Laden*, *Bin Laden*, *Shoot to Kill* and *My Atomic Aunt* amongst many others.



**Director of Photography: Emma Dalesman**

Emma Dalesman is a freelance DOP and graduate of the Cinematography MA at the National Film and Television School. Shooting a range of projects encompassing fiction, documentary, commercials and animation, her work has been nominated for both the Kodak and Fujifilm Cinematography awards and shown in competition at international film festivals. Currently working on her second feature length documentary the first having been successful in securing completion funds from Al-Jazeera. Her commercial work has been shown across numerous platforms including terrestrial and international broadcast, new media and multiplex cinemas nationwide.